



Town of Amherst Voters Guide



***Please bring this with you to the polls on **March 9, 2010**
at Souhegan High School between 6 AM and 8 PM***

Dear Fellow Residents of Amherst:

The first portion of the annual Town Meeting took place on February 3rd, with approximately 150 voters in attendance. During the meeting there was spirited debate on many of the articles contained within the warrant, and the meeting didn't adjourn until after midnight. It was a pleasure to participate in such a lively meeting and listen to the healthy dialogue that produced the final articles that you will find on the ballot when you participate in the second portion of Town Meeting. Your chance to cast your vote on these important issues, within the privacy of the voting booth, is Tuesday, March 9th from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM at the Souhegan High School. We strongly encourage you to participate in the process, and make your statements concerning the future of your town known to all by voting on Tuesday.

The enclosed guide is the effort by your Board of Selectmen to help you have a clearer understanding of what each article is proposing to accomplish. We understand that legal requirements cause each article to be written in sometimes complex language which frequently can serve to confuse us on the actual intent. This is even more valid for people who may not have been actively involved in the discussion that led to the creation of the particular article. This guide is meant to explain in common language the intent of each article, as well as to offer some background information on the topic. The Board also encourages all voters to research each Petition Warrant Article. This guide supplements the annual Town Report which is now available at the Town Hall, the Library, and the Police Station. Should you have any questions regarding your town government after reviewing these documents, we urge you to contact Town Administrator Gary MacGuire (673-6041 x209, GMacGuire@AmherstNH.gov) or any of the Board members (info available at www.AmherstNH.gov). We would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

The Selectmen have worked very closely with our town Department Heads, as well as the dedicated members of your Ways and Means Committee to create a budget and supporting warrant articles that provide the necessary services for the next year, as well as position the town for the future. The tough economy has made that task even more difficult as we weigh the desires of the taxpayer against the long term well being of our town. The Board has also had long hours of philosophical debate regarding articles that allow the voters to weigh in with their opinions on subjects such as whether tax dollars should be spent on charitable giving, should town mosquito control be performed by the town or left to the individual, or how should we fund our necessary road repairs. These decisions, and more, are now in the hands of the voters. There will also be positions within town government which will be selected by your vote. We urge you to research the issues, make your informed decisions, and please come to the Souhegan High School on Tuesday, March 9th to cast your vote.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to our employees, our Ways and Means Committee, and the citizens who participated in the process that has produced the warrant that is in front of you this year. We could not have been as effective without each of them. We would also like to thank you for the opportunity to represent you, and we appreciate your support as we work together to preserve Amherst as a great community to be a part of.

Sincerely,

The Board of Selectmen

George Infanti, Chairman

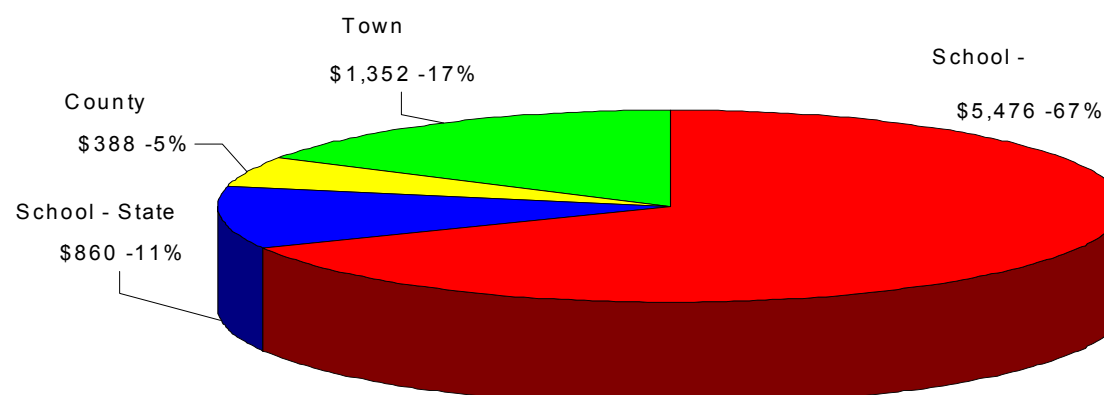
Tom Grella, Vice Chairman

Bruce Bowler

Brad Galinson

Jim O'Mara

\$400,000 House - Property Tax Allocation



TOWN WARRANT ARTICLES

ARTICLE 22

Road Reconstruction Bond



To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000) (Gross Budget) to reconstruct approximately twenty-three miles of roads deemed in need of reconstruction as more particularly identified on the 2010 Proposed Road Reconstruction List derived from the Road Management Study of 2009, which list is dated January 11, 2010 and to authorize the issuance of bonds or notes therefore of not more than fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000) in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) and to authorize the Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and other conditions of the bonds or notes in their judgment, it being further understood that said bonding authority shall be on the condition that the Selectmen shall NOT issue or negotiate bonds or notes for this appropriation in any given year for more than four million (\$4,000,000), it being contemplated that the overall bonding authority will not lapse until the project is completed but that the project will be completed in annual increments, borrowing for which shall not exceed four million in any given year, and to take all other action relative thereto. This is a special Article in accordance with RSA 32. 3/5 Ballot Vote Required

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

A number of roads in Amherst, about 23 miles worth, are in need of reconstruction. They are almost all old roads that were not built to take the weight and volume of today's traffic. These early roads began as dirt roads and were built of whatever material existed on site. In the 1930's we began to pave our roads by smoothing out the dirt and applying a couple of inches of asphalt. That treatment served the people of the town well for a number of years as Amherst was a small town and most traffic was, indeed, local. Since the 1970's the town has seen a large

amount of growth, and our traffic has increased accordingly as more people in town commute to other places for work, and more people drive through Amherst from neighboring communities. The volume of today's traffic, coupled with added weight of newer vehicles, has taken its toll on those old roads, which were never built to handle it.

In May of 2008 the Amherst Board of Selectmen appointed a committee, the Road Funding Analysis Committee (RFAC), and charged them with creating a plan to address the condition of roads in Amherst. Over several months the committee met numerous times and formulated a plan of action. The committee utilized the town's Road Surface Management System (RSMS), an inventory of our roads which is frequently updated as an important document in their work. Additional research included discussions with other towns' public works, with representatives of State of NH Transportation, and with paving contractors regarding their experiences and strategies of road maintenance and rebuilding. The Committee presented their report to the Selectmen in October of 2008 that showed that nearly 23 miles of Amherst roads needed to be reconstructed. A financial plan was put together that indicated the reconstruction of the required roads is estimated to cost a total of 15 million dollars. It is reasonable to assume that something in the area of two to four miles is a reasonable amount of work to be attempted in any one building season. To do more would tax the ability to properly oversee such work, as well as make it nearly impossible to easily navigate around town with the amount of detours that would be necessary. In viewing financing options last year and recognizing the difficult economic times, a decision was made to seek voter approval in March 2009 for a 6 million dollar bond to begin reconstruction with 9 miles of roads over two years. The plan was not approved by the voters. This year it was felt that a long term plan that demonstrated the commitment to fix all of our bad roads was a more appropriate solution. At the same time, recognizing the current economy while still taking the best advantage of interest rates and low constructions costs, the decision was made to limit the amount of funds to be bonded in any one year to 4 million dollars. This would provide sufficient funds to repair an appropriate amount of roadways in a construction season, and flexibility for the town to seek additional bonds based on the best circumstances.

The long term process to rebuild the infrastructure of our roads is overdue. Prices will rise and additional miles of roads will require further work if this project is deferred. Careful and thorough analysis of our current roadways has identified approximately 23 miles, made up of sections of 52 roads, as requiring reconstruction. This specific list has been

identified and adopted by the Board of Selectmen (available for review on the town website) as the roads to be repaired. If passed, the bond can only be used to reconstruct the roads on this list. The funds cannot, by law, be used for any other purpose. As a bond article, a super majority of 60% of the voters must support this article for it to pass.

In the past, we have applied short-term solutions to long-term problems to stem the deterioration of the old roads, but simply paving over roads that were not constructed for today's traffic proves to be futile. A year or so after paving, cracks reappear through the new layer of asphalt. Today's cars and trucks continue to beat away at the inadequate pavement, and water continues to seep through the cracks into the base, causing more frost heaves in the winter, which makes the cracking of the road even worse, and so it goes. Placing a layer of asphalt on a poor quality road is analogous to painting rotten wood siding – the paint will soon crack and blister, it will no longer do its job, and the siding will continue to rot, only faster. The only solution for these roads is to reconstruct them so that they can handle today's traffic. Doing less is neither prudent nor economical. We urge you to study this issue, ask questions of your local officials, and make a decision in the best long term interest of the Town of Amherst.

**Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.15 Per
Thousand**

ARTICLE 23

Open Space Land Bond

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of two million two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$2,250,000) for the purchase of open space lands or other property interests as determined by the Selectmen and to authorize the issuance of bonds or notes therefore of not more than two million two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$2,250,000) in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) and to authorize the Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon; and, further, that the amount raised and appropriated herein may be used to defray the costs attributable to due diligence inspections, title search charges, closing costs and other similar charges associated with any such acquisition. These funds may only be expended to meet conservation and passive recreation needs. The authorization to borrow provided hereunder shall not lapse until five (5) years from the date of the

passage of this article. This is a special Article in accordance with RSA 32. 3/5 Ballot Vote Required

(The Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-2 recommends a yes vote)

This article authorizes the Board of Selectmen to draw on a bond issue dedicated to protecting land for conservation and passive recreation through purchase in fee or a conservation easement. The term *Passive Recreation* could include such personal activities as: hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and usually horseback and mountain bike riding. A conservation easement allows a willing seller to retain ownership of a parcel but further subdivision of the parcel is prohibited. Land chosen for protection under this article would have important natural qualities, such as: wildlife habitats, water resources, special scenic features and space for human visitors to relax. No bond drawdown and hence no tax impact would be incurred unless a specific land parcel is protected. This authority would replace a similar article that was passed by the voters in 2005 granting authority to the Selectmen to bond up to 5.5 million dollars for like purchases. The previous authority, which expires this year, was utilized in 2008 to purchase an appropriate 25 acre parcel of open space for approximately \$300,000.

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.13 Per Thousand

ARTICLE 24

Recreation Land Purchase Bond
(by petition)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of six hundred twenty five thousand and 00/100 (\$625,000) (Gross Budget) to purchase a land parcel and further develop said parcel to replace Recreation Cemetery Fields, and to authorize said funds to be raised through the issuance of bonds, bond anticipation notes or serial notes therefore in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA 33) and to authorize the Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes in their judgment, and to further authorize the Selectmen to contract for and expend any Federal or State aid that may be available for this project and to further authorize interest earned on this bond to be utilized to pay for costs associated with the parcel purchase. It is contemplated that the amount to be raised by bonds or notes will be offset by available public or private grants, and other sources of donations of which the Board may become aware and in its discretion determine to

accept; and the Board of Selectmen is authorized to accept such monies on behalf of the Town. This is a special Article in accordance with RSA 32. 3/5 Ballot Vote Required

(The Board of Selectmen has a split opinion with a vote of 2-2-1)

The Board encourages all voters to research each Petition Warrant Article.

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.04 Per Thousand

ARTICLE 25

Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth herein, totaling \$9,760,645. Should this article be defeated the default budget shall be \$9,736,214 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the town or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. This operating budget warrant article does not include appropriations contained in ANY other warrant articles.

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

The town is currently operating under a default budget as determined by the voters last March. With the global economic picture continuing to be less than optimistic, the Board’s goal in commencing the budget process was to create a budget that maintained the current level of services. The Board did not consider any additional town employees or adding new hours to existing positions. Any additional equipment or programs were scrutinized individually during the budget process. The amounts of the various materials used were maintained at existing levels with only the projected cost increases included. As the budget was further refined, the Board made a substantial concession in existing employee health care coverage and reduced a projected 17% increase in premiums to a more tolerable 7% escalation. The Board reduced hours of the building inspector based on projected less building occurring, requiring fewer inspections. The Town salary scale for employees was frozen at the existing level. With the hard work of all of the Department Heads, the final budget created was three tenths of a

percent (0.3%) higher than the current operating budget. The Board, recognizing that difficult, balancing decisions were required, allowed for increases that average approximately 2.9% in the essential services of Fire, Police and DPW, while limiting increases in what are defined as non-essential but prized departments such as Recreation and Library to an average of 2.3%. This year’s budget is over \$60,000 lower than last year’s proposed budget, and approximately \$31,000 higher than the current default budget. The budget does maintain our existing level of services, and also manages to absorb a \$30,000 increase in NH Retirement System costs that were downshifted from the State to the town as part of the state budget. The budget does not ignore our future needs as it restores \$40,000 that was eliminated in our current default budget from the Department of Public Works budget for preventative road maintenance. It also funds a wage and salary survey that was last done ten years ago. This study will help in determining a fair and equitable compensation plan that will assist in hiring and retaining our valuable employees; a move that will save town funds in the long haul. The difference between the operating budget and the default budget this year is approximately \$24,000, an amount on the surface that seems small; however in such a lean budget this difference would have a long term detrimental impact on the town. Though the actual default budget would not be determined until late May or early June, some possible consequences could include a reduction once again in DPW road maintenance, the elimination of the wage and salary study, further reductions in the building inspector hours, deferring a position upgrade in Recreation, and an unspecified reduction in the police budget. These additional reductions would not have a severe impact on the day to day operations that the taxpayer would see, however when viewed over the long term, it would cause the town to regress. The Board and the town employees are committed to delivering the best service possible to the citizens of Amherst with the funds that the taxpayers provide, however the default budget does not provide the resources to adequately provide for the needs, future and current, of the town. With the revenue numbers leveling off, and reversing a trend of declining dollars, the proposed town budget would lead to a reduction in the amount of taxes a homeowner would pay for all town services. Based on an average Amherst home assessed at \$400,000, the taxes would be reduced by \$24 a year.

The chart included below highlights significant budget changes

Souhegan Regional Landfill	(\$53,000)
<i>Reduction in the assessment by the District</i>	
Public Works	
<i>Restore Outside Hire line to level before Default Budget</i>	\$40,000
<i>Increased costs for mandated changes Stormwater II program</i>	\$10,000
Health Agencies	(\$36,000)
<i>Have been submitted as a warrant article to allow voter input</i>	
NH Retirement System Costs	\$30,000
<i>Increased costs downshifted from the state</i>	
Workers Compensation Insurance	\$ 5,500
<i>Increase Costs based on past experience</i>	
Employee Wage/Benefit Study	\$ 5,500
<i>Update a study last done 10 years ago</i>	
Planning/Zoning	(\$ 5,000)
<i>Reduction in hours of building inspector</i>	
Fire Department	\$ 4,000
<i>Protective clothing and air mask fit testing</i>	

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.02 Per Thousand

ARTICLE 26

Public Health Mosquito Surveillance and Control Program



To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) to develop a Public Health Mosquito Surveillance and Control Program. This program is designed to monitor and help prevent the presence of mosquito borne vector diseases in accordance with the state of New Hampshire Arboviral Surveillance, Prevention and Control Guidelines.

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

This article requests funding to develop an Inte-

grated Pest Management Public Health Mosquito Surveillance and Control Program for Amherst, in accordance with the State of New Hampshire Arboviral Surveillance, Prevention and Control Guidelines. This program would be designed to monitor and help prevent the presence of dangerous mosquito borne diseases in Amherst such as West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). At present, our neighboring communities of Goffstown, Bedford, Merrimack and Nashua are listed as “High Risk” target communities by the NH Division of Public Health for WNV & EEE, which indicates the immediate need for community intervention. *Integrated Pest Management* (IPM) is an ecosystem based strategy that focuses on long-term prevention of pests (in this case specifically mosquitoes) that contribute to the spread of WNV and/or EEE. Through a combination of techniques such as biological control, habitat manipulation and modification of cultural practices, Amherst can proactively work towards the goal of prevention and control of WNV & EEE.

Treatments are made with the goal of removing only the target organism. Pest control materials such as the natural bacteria larvicide BTi (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*) are selected and applied in a manner that minimizes risks to human health, beneficial and non-target organisms (honey bees, dragon flies, etc.), and the

Amherst environment.

The overall mosquito control program costs include \$5,000 for surveillance and \$35,000 for larviciding and permits. Ultimately, this would provide a comprehensive program beginning with surveillance, monitoring, trapping and testing of adult mosquitoes; to treatment of larvae (a major focus of an effective control program) through larviciding.

The information the Town has received from State Health Officials at this time indicates that EEE and WNV will again be a “High Risk” concern in NH during 2010. The spring 2010 program, if approved, would begin immediately following town meeting in March. This program would need to be funded annually if the Town continues to have concerns about the mosquito population. However, if we all do our part to minimize the spread of WNV & EEE over the next few years, we stand a good chance of suppressing its risk potential, thereby reducing the need for such elaborate control measures and costs in future budgets. This is the primary reason why we have selected to pursue this program via a warrant rather than include it in the current proposed budget.

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.02 Per Thousand

ARTICLE 27

Municipal Lease to Replace Transfer Station Scale



To see if the municipality will vote to authorize the selectmen to enter into a three year lease agreement for \$61,785 for the purpose of leasing a replacement transfer station scale for the Highway Department, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,595 for the first year's payment for that purpose. This lease agreement contains an escape clause. (Majority vote required).

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

The existing *pit design* scale at the transfer station is used to determine an equitable cost for a citizen to pay for demolition materials that they bring to the transfer station. The town must pay a fee to have the demolition trucked away and disposed of, and the fee charged to the individual offsets that cost. The items that make up demolition range dramatically in weights. Going across a scale as opposed to assigning a fee based on cubic yardage is proven to be the fairest assessment.

The industry standard for the life of a properly maintained truck scale is ten to twelve years and our scale is starting its fifteenth season. The scale has required more frequent and costly maintenance and extensive rust on those parts located within the pit indicate a short remaining life. The scale is inspected and certified by state inspectors each year. Should it fail and repair costs prove prohibitive, the scale would be removed from service. At that time the town would enact a system of charging a *flat rate* based on the size of the vehicle. Such a system is typically inequitable to the citizen or the town, and requires more man-hours to manage.

Realizing the demise of our current scale is fast approaching, the options available to the town were examined and are identified below:

Option #1 - Replace the scale

- 1a. Pay in one year
- 1b. Pay using "Lease to Purchase"

Option #2 - Don't replace the scale

- 2a. Don't charge for dumping demolition
- 2b. Don't accept demolition (not an option)
- 2c. Charge on another basis
- 2d. Honor System Dumping

Option (2b) was summarily dismissed as not viable as our citizens would have no option for the disposal of their demolition and it could lead to increased illegal dumping. With the assistance of our Ways and Means Committee, a detailed cost analysis of the remaining options was conducted and a *Net Present Value (NPV)* was determined. The *NPV* is the sum of expenses, offset by revenues, over a ten year span for each option.

This study showed the second most economical option was to purchase a new scale utilizing a three year municipal lease purchase plan. This plan, over ten years, was approximately \$3,000 more expensive than outright purchase but over \$100,000 cheaper than the next lower cost option. To lessen the impact to the voters, it was decided to pursue the lease purchase option to spread the impact to our taxpayers over a three year period. The dollar figure for this article has been estimated based on a quote from one vendor. Should this plan be approved by the voters, the purchase would be put out to bid in an effort to get the best possible pricing. The new scale is proposed to be an above ground electronic steel deck truck scale, and it would be relocated to a new, more user friendly location.

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.01 Per Thousand

ARTICLE 28

Submission of Fact Finder's Report Per RSA 273-A:12 (III)(a)

To see whether the Town, pursuant to RSA 273-A:12, (III)(a) will vote to accept the findings and recommendation made by the Fact Finder in the matter between the Police Department Employees Union and the Town of Amherst, which findings and recommendation related to the following listed two (2) issues are set forth below:

Issue # 1: Wages

Recommendation regarding the appropriate salary schedule to be included in the Successor Agreement:

- 1. The elimination of the first step of the current salary schedule and the addition of a two

percent (2%) step to the upper end of the scale;

- 2. The inclusion of a provision in the Successor Agreement which would provide that employees who are currently at the maximum step of the existing scale shall receive this two percent (2%) increase retroactive to July 1, 2009; and otherwise continue the contractual practice of allowing movement through the step scale tied to the employee's anniversary date;

- 3. The implementation of the following wage increases on the designated dates:

a. 4.95 % Across the Board retroactive to July 1, 2009

b. Granting of all earned but outstanding Step increases retroactive to July 1, 2009 pursuant to the contractual practice in effect during the Previous Agreement

c. 0% Across the Board increases effective July 1, 2010

d. The inclusion of a contractual provision that the Parties reopen negotiations on the sole issue of the cost of living adjustment for the third year of the contract no later than September 15, 2010.

Issue # 2: Armored Vests:

Recommendation regarding the armored vest issue be included in the Successor Agreement:

That Article 15, Section 5, as it appears in the Parties' Previous Agreement, be modified to read as follows:

"Officers required to wear protective body armor shall be issued body armor which has a warranty period still supported by the manufacturer. Officers will not be required to wear body armor with expired manufacture warranties. Officers who detect possible defects in the body armor shall bring this defect to the attention of the Chief of Police for replacement."

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a no vote)

Our patrolmen and sergeants are represented by the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). The current collective bargaining agreement (CBA) expired June 30, 2009. The town and the police officers began negotiations in August 2008 and in December 2008 a tentative agreement was reached. The union membership rejected the agreement. Since that time the town and police union have continued to negotiate. We have participated in mediation and fact finding in an effort to resolve a couple of unresolved issues.

During the fact finding session both the union and the town presented their positions to an independent Fact Finder and he issued the report and recommendations included in Article 28. This article asks the voters to either accept or reject the recommendations of the Fact Finder.

Because it will still be necessary for the Selectmen and the union to negotiate a full CBA, another warrant article will eventually come before you, the legislative body, asking for approval of the cost items associated with any agreement we reach. The future warrant article may also include other tentatively agreed to cost items which were not a part of the Fact Finder's report.

The first Fact Finder's recommendation calls for an adjustment to the existing wage scale by eliminating the first step of the scale and the addition of a step at the top of the wage scale and the implementation of wage adjustments of a 4.95% cost of living increase (COLA) and the granting of a 2% step increase for all union members, retroactive to July 1, 2009. Additionally, the Fact Finder further recommends a 0% across the board increase effective July 1, 2010, and directed the parties to reopen negotiations to address the sole issue of a cost of living adjustment for the third year of the contract.

The second and last Fact Finder recommendation is to modify the contract to include language relative to the replacement of armored vests. Members are to be issued armored vests that are covered by a manufacturer warranty and are free of defect. This recommended language reflects the current management practice of the chief.

The estimated cost of the Fact Finder's recommendations for fiscal year 2009 is \$66,521. The estimated cost for fiscal year 2010 is an additional \$12,008. The estimated cost for fiscal year 2011 cannot be determined as it remains an open item. Pursuant to and consistent with New Hampshire state statute, if the voters accept the Fact Finder's recommendations, the governing body (Selectmen) will bring the mandate of the legislative body to the negotiation table. When a successor agreement has been reached, the cost items associated with the agreement will be presented to the voter by warrant in 2011.

If the Fact Finder's recommendations are rejected by the voters, the Board of Selectmen will return to the negotiation table without a mandate from you, the legislative body.

Article 29, allows the Board of Selectmen, at its option, to request a special town meeting to address cost items only, if Article 28 is rejected by the voters and a successor agreement is reached before the next annual meeting.

Estimated Tax Impact: None

ARTICLE 29

**Authorization for Optional
Special Town Meeting to
Consider Cost Items for Police
Employees Union CBA**

Shall the Town, if article #28, (above), seeking the acceptance of the fact finder's report is defeated, authorize the Selectmen to call one special meeting, at its option, to address article #28, cost items only?

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

Please see Article 28 for explanation

Estimated Tax Impact: None

ARTICLE 30

**Purchase Ambulance from
Capital Reserve**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and authorize the withdrawal from the Capital Reserve Fund established for this purpose (Ambulance Fund) the sum of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000) for the purpose of purchasing one fully equipped replacement Type I Emergency Response Ambulance, or take action relative thereto.

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote.)

Support of this warrant article would authorize the replacement of one of the town's two existing 2001 Ford F-350 Type I ambulances. This vehicle is currently scheduled for replacement in 2011 due to excessive electrical system use, corrosion, clock hours on the vehicle systems (transmission & drivetrain), blood borne pathogen exposures and general emergency use. Mileage as of February 2010 was approximately 83,465 with an anticipated additional 8,425 miles projected to be added (91,890 total) within the following year. A new 2011 Type I ambulance will include innovative safety features both inside and out designed to prevent injuries among medical personnel as well as the patient. New "high visibility" vehicle markings and tremendous improvements to vehicle performance, technology and efficiency will greatly enhance the town's emergency medical services program. This purchase would be made from the capital reserve account created and funded for this purpose. This account has sufficient funds for the purchase and no tax dollars are necessary to replace this ambulance.

Estimated Tax Impact: None

ARTICLE 31

**Establish a Bridge Replacement
Capital Reserve Fund**



To see if the Town will authorize the establishment of a Capital Reserve Fund (pursuant to RSA 35), which will be known as the Bridge Replacement Capital Reserve Fund and raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 to be placed in this fund the purpose of which shall be to provide for the orderly replacement of bridges in the Town of Amherst and appoint the selectmen as agents to expend from the fund.

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

Amherst has fourteen municipally owned bridges, all of which are inspected by the State of New Hampshire every two years. At this time three of our bridges have been red listed by the State. The three are:

- New Boston Road (at the Mont Vernon T/L)
- Horace Greeley Road (at the Bedford T/L)
- Manchester Road (near Mack Hill)

A red listed bridge is defined as being structurally deficient and no longer meeting current highway standards due to its age and deterioration. Once a bridge is red listed, they are then inspected annually by the state. A bridge in this category is not in imminent failure condition and is allowed to carry traffic with load restrictions.

This article seeks to create a capital reserve account to prepare for the eventual replacement of our worst bridges. Although the New Hampshire Department of Transportation indicates the average cost to replace a bridge is \$700,000, there is potential state aid that would pay for 80% of the replacement cost. The process of participating in this program begins with the state estimating the total cost of repairing/replacing each bridge this spring. From there,

the town is placed in the queue for state aid, with state aid not being available until 2018. This window of time will give Amherst taxpayers seven years to amass its 20% of the estimated project cost in the capital reserve fund. If a capital reserve is not established and funded, and a bridge fails, the repairs or replacement would have to be completely funded from the operating budget, with potential 80% reimbursement from the State coming in some future year, such as happened with our New Boston Road Bridge several years ago.

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.01 Per Thousand

The next several articles all involve routine additions to existing capital reserve funds. Capital reserve funds allow for the orderly replacement of failing equipment, vehicles, and buildings without erratic spikes to the budget. They create a system of savings accounts that spreads the cost to the taxpayer over several years. Funds in a capital reserve account can, by law, only be used for the intended purpose that they were established for. The current interpretation of RSA 35:5 requires that these be presented as warrant articles each year for voter approval.

ARTICLE 32

Recreational Facilities Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to two hundred fifty thousand (\$250,000.00) from the unexpended fund balance (surplus), to the extent that funds are available in said fund balance, that no additional amounts are raised from taxation, and that said funds are placed into the Recreational Facilities Capital Reserve Fund, previously established.

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

This fund was created to develop recreational facilities beyond just playing fields. Below are examples of past uses of these funds:

2007: Purchased new turf mower, aerator, slice seeder and tiller which improved existing athletic fields and reduced labor. Prepared for additional maintenance on new fields

2008: Developed Bean Fields which included 2 .5 multi-flat fields and a 60’ baseball diamond

2009: Refurbished Amherst Middle School softball fields which improved turf for both softball and field hockey and provided safer playing surfaces

2009: Funded Recreation Program & Facilities master plan which provided a short and long term planning tool

This capital reserve balance was \$49,190 as of 12/09

Estimated Tax Impact: None

ARTICLE 33

Fire Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund



To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred fifty thousand (\$150,000) Dollars, to be added to the Fire Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund, previously established, and to further appoint the Selectmen as agents to expend from this fund in accordance with RSA 35:15 II or take any action relative thereto.

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

This article funds the capital reserve account for the replacement of fire apparatus. In year’s past, this line was routinely funded to prepare for future purchases; however in recent years no funds have been added to this account. Our 1987 Pierce fire pumper is tentatively scheduled to be replaced in 2012 at an approximate cost of \$575,000. This truck originally cost \$163,870 and was refurbished in 1998 at a cost of \$18,820. This truck is currently exhibiting significant rusting in multiple areas. At this time our fire chief is researching all funding options for the potential purchase, as well as developing specifications for the replacement truck. To maximize firefighter capabilities and minimize the risk of injuries, it is important that the fire apparatus is equipped with the latest safety features and operational capabilities. The changes in design and technology of fire apparatus over the past 22 years has dramatically increased firefighter safety as well as improved

the versatility and efficiency of the apparatus. Once final specifications and pricing are determined, a decision will be made as to the most appropriate and cost effective funding mechanism. This fund will be utilized to minimize the overall impact to the taxpayer of the significant purchase. The capital reserve balance is currently about \$8,000.

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.08 Per Thousand

ARTICLE 34

Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund



Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-two thousand dollars (\$22,000) to be added to the Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund previously established.

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

Responding to approximately 750 emergency calls each year, this would add \$22,000 to an existing Capital Reserve Fund established to budget for new replacement ambulances every 10 years. It is estimated that each new ambulance will cost \$150,000, one of which we seek to replace this year. This capital reserve balance is \$209,921 as of 12/09, which will be significantly depleted if the ambulance purchase in Article 30 is authorized.

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.01 Per Thousand

ARTICLE 35

Assessing Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000) to be added to the Assessing Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund previously established.

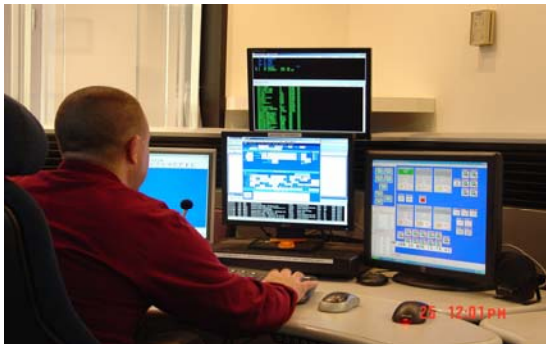
(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

This would add \$35,000 to an existing Capital Reserve Fund established to budget for the eventual state mandated reassessment of all properties in Amherst. This article was not supported by the voters last year, requiring an increase in the amount requested this year in order to provide sufficient funds for the upcoming reassessment. It is estimated that the next revaluation, due in 2011 will cost in excess of \$100,000. By law, the assessment must be funded and completed by the Town in this time frame. If there are not sufficient funds in the account at the time the project is required, the Town will need to reallocate funds within the budget to pay for this mandated reassessment. This capital reserve balance is \$41,166 as of 12/09

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.02 Per Thousand

ARTICLE 36

Communications Center Capital Reserve Fund



Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be added to the Communications Center Capital Reserve Fund previously established.

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

The Center manages over 60,500 calls for service annually. This would add \$5,000 to an existing Capital Reserve Fund that would be used to add or replace necessary equipment & software as needed, as well as address emergency failures of radio equipment. This capital reserve balance is \$5,066 as of 12/09

Estimated Tax Impact: Less than \$0.01 Per Thousand

ARTICLE 37

Town 250th Anniversary Celebration Capital Reserve Fund

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be added to the Town 250th Anniversary Celebration Capital Reserve Fund previously established.

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

This Reserve Fund was established three years ago to prepare for the Town’s 250th anniversary celebration which is taking place this year. The committee that has planned our year long celebration of this milestone is seeking these final town funds to assist in this event. This would be the third and final contribution to provide funds for the celebration. This capital reserve balance is \$10,290 as of 12/09

Estimated Tax Impact: Less Than \$0.01 Per Thousand

ARTICLE 38

Forestview Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to be added to the Forestview Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund previously established.

(The Board of Selectmen by a vote of 3-2 recommends a yes vote)

This capital reserve was established under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of designing a new municipal cemetery. Forestview Cemetery will be located on Merrimack Road and requires the assistance of a Landscape Architect or other professionals to create a design and layout. Our existing Meadowview Cemetery on Foundry Street only has 165 lots remaining at this time. The design of the new cemetery is approximately 40% complete. Once the project is put out to bid; permitting and actual construction could take two or more years. This capital reserve balance is \$2,746 as of 12/09

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.01 Per Thousand

ARTICLE 39

Town Computer System Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be added to the Town Computer System Capital Reserve Fund previously established.

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

Our Town departments continue to budget individually for standard hardware and software updates and replacements. This fund provides for emergency replacement of significant items such as large servers, as well as levels out the cost of substantial upgrades and replacements of major hardware and software. This capital reserve balance is \$12,957 as of 12/09,

Estimated Tax Impact: Less than \$0.01 Per Thousand

ARTICLE 40

Health and Human Service Agencies

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty five thousand dollars (\$35,000) to support the health and human service agencies which provide service to Amherst residents, the amount of the grant and identity of the receiving organization to be determined by the Selectmen as they, in their judgment, deem appropriate; said agencies to include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following: Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children; American Red Cross; Big Brothers and Sisters; Host Homes; Bridges; Nashua Community Council; Home, Health and Hospice Care; Keystone Hall; Nashua Area Health Center; Opportunity Networks; St. Joseph Community Services; Child Advocacy Center; NH Association for the Blind; Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative; and Souhegan Valley Interfaith Housing Corp.

(The Board of Selectmen unanimously recommends a yes vote)

Last year the Town included all existing health/

social service agency funding requests in the budget. This year the initial requests for funding totaled well over \$50,000. This warrant article allows the voters to decide if they want to use tax dollars to support our non-profit providers who serve the residents of Amherst. If the voters support this article, funding will be apportioned out to the requesting agencies utilizing an equitable formula.

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.02 Per Thousand

ARTICLE 41

Resolution to Define Marriage (Submitted by Petition)

To see if the Town will vote to approve the following resolution to be forwarded to our State Representative(s), our State Senator, the Speaker of the House, and the Senate President.

Resolved: The citizens of New Hampshire should be allowed to vote on an amendment to the New Hampshire Constitution that defines “marriage”.

The Board encourages all voters to research each Petition Warrant Article

Estimated Tax Impact: None



Article 44: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance which amendment, if adopted, would:

Revise Art. III General Zoning Provisions, Sec. 3.2 Non-conforming Uses and Non-complying Setbacks, Para. 3.2.3: by adding after “If a structure contains a non-conforming use: ...or does not comply with Zoning setbacks ... and it is damaged by fire, ...”.

This addition clarifies the status of a non-complying structure destroyed by fire.

Article 45: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 2 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance which amendment, if adopted, would:

Revise Art. III General Zoning Provisions, Sec. 3.4 Signs, Para. 3.4.3.3.9, by deleting paragraph and moving to Subsec. 3.4.4.2.2, as new Para. 3.4.4.2.2.5, and to Subsec. 3.4.4.2.3 as new Para. 3.4.4.2.3.5.

This change moves certain types of signs to a different section of the sign ordinance.

Article 46: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 3 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance which amendment, if adopted, would:

ARTICLE 42

Return to Town Meeting form of Government (Submitted by Petition)

Resolved that the Town of Amherst shall return to the Town Meeting form of government. Reversing the decision to move to the SB2 form of government; this to be accomplished as quickly as the legal and practical realities shall allow.

The Board encourages all voters to research each Petition Warrant Article.

Estimated Tax Impact: None

ARTICLE 43

To Create a Capital Reserve Fund for Transportation with an Additional Motor Vehicle Registration Fee (Submitted by Petition)

To see if the town will vote to collect an additional motor vehicle registration fee of \$1.50 per vehicle for the purpose of supporting

a municipal transportation fund for the purposes set forth in RSA 261:153 VI, and further, to vote to establish said fund which shall be a capital reserve fund established for this purpose and governed by the provisions of RSA 35. Proceeds from said fund are to be used to support eligible local transportation improvement projects, specifically public transportation, and furthermore, to appoint the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from this Capital Reserve Fund.

The funds may be used as matching funds for state or federal funds, and shall be appropriated by the legislative body of the Town of Amherst for purposes stated in the warrant article only. The funds shall not be used to offset any other non-transportation appropriations made by the Town. The additional fee shall be collected from all vehicles, both passenger and commercial, with the exception of all terrain vehicles, as defined in RSA 215-A:1, 1-b and antique motor vehicles or motorcycles, as defined in RSA 259:4.

(The Board of Selectmen by a vote of 0-4-1 recommends a no vote)

The Board encourages all voters to research each Petition Warrant Article.

Estimated Tax Impact: None



PROPOSED 2010 ZONING CHANGES

Revise Art. III General Zoning Provisions, Sec. 3.4 Signs, Para. 3.4.4.2.2.3 by adding after “...provided that such sign does not: exceed... forty (40) square feet, ...” and also changing (a) to: Para. 3.4.4.2.2.1 and (b) to: Para 3.4.4.2.2.2.

This change adds a missing word to existing sign ordinance and adds corrected reference numbers.

Article 47: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 4 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance which amendment, if adopted, would:

Revise Art. III General Zoning Provisions, Sec. 3.4 Signs, Subsec. 3.4.4.2.1 Special Cases, Para. 3.4.4.2.8 by deleting sentence: “Open Flags (Deleted 3.8.94)”, and adding to Subsec. 3.4.3.3 a new para: Para. 3.4.3.3.17 In the Business Sign District, one non-illuminated “OPEN” flag may be displayed for each separate business unit. No name, logo, or lettering other than the word “OPEN” may be displayed on such flags. Open flags may be displayed at the building during business hours and must be displayed at the building entrance. Open flags shall be no more than three (3) feet in height and six (6) feet in length. Flag colors are limited to standard, non-fluorescent red, white, and blue.

This change allows businesses to have “open flags” with de-tailed conditions.

Article 48: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 5 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance which amendment, if adopted, would:

Revise Art. III General Zoning Provisions, Sec. 3.7 Building Regulations, Para. 3.7.1 by deleting sentence and changing to: See New Hampshire Building Code.

This change adds a reference to the New Hampshire Building Code.

Article 49: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 6 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance which amendment, if adopted, would:

Revise Art. III General Zoning Provisions, Sec. 3.14 Renewable Energy Systems, Para. 3.14.1 by deleting "...more than 5KW but...".

This change deletes the minimum kilowatts for renewable energy systems per the NH RSA.

Article 50: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 7 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance which amendment, if adopted, would:

Revise Art. III General Zoning Provisions, Sec. 3.15 Home Occupations, Subsec. 3.15.6 Prohibited Uses, Para. 3.15.6.8 by deleting entire paragraph and adding Daycare facilities larger than a maximum of six (6) children.

This change clarifies the number of children as six (6) in a Home Occupation daycare.

Article 51: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 8 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance which amendment, if adopted, would:

Revise Art. III General Zoning Provisions, Sec. 3.18 Conditional Use Permits, Subsec. 3.18.3 Standards Applicable to All Conditional Use Permits, Para. 3.18.3.1.5 by deleting the last sentence shown in parenthesis.

This change removes an erroneous Town form requirement from the Conditional Use Ordinance.

Article 52: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 9 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance which amendment, if adopted, would:

Revise Art. IV Zoning Regulations, Sec. 4.3 Residential / Rural Zone, Subsec. 4.3.1 Permitted Uses, Para. 4.3.1.9 by deleting paragraph. Sec. 4.4 Northern Transitional Zone, Subsec. 4.4.2 Permitted Uses, Para. 4.4.2.8 by deleting paragraph. Sec. 4.5 Northern Rural Zone, Subsec. 4.5.2 Permitted Uses, Para. 4.5.2.9 by deleting paragraph.

This change deletes references in three (3) residential zones relative to children allowed in a Home Occupation daycare. See Article 50 above.

Article 53: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 10 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance which amendment, if adopted, would:

Revise Art. VI Administration, Sec. 6.2 Building Permits, Certificates of

Occupancy, Earth Removal Permits, Subsec. 6.2.1 Building Permits, Para. 6.2.1.1 by deleting "...all building and health laws and Ordinances." and adding "...the Amherst Water Pollution Control Regulations and the New Hampshire Building Code."

Sec. 6.2 Building Permits, Certificates of Occupancy, Earth Removal Permits, Subsec. 6.2.8 Second paragraph, by changing "...residential..." to "non-residential".

Sec. 6.8 Penalty by deleting ...\$ 100 (one hundred dollars)... and adding "... \$ 275 (two hundred and seventy five dollars) ...".

This change updates codes for construction required for a Building Permit, corrects an erroneous word, and also corrects the Ordinance to reflect the correct penalty per RSA.

Article 54: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 11 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance which amendment, if adopted, would:

Revise Art. III General Zoning Provisions, Sec. 3.4 Signs, Subsec. 3.4.1 Definitions by adding a new definition: Event-Specific Sign: A temporary sign used to announce an event such as a festival, parade, dance, meeting, church or club-sponsored event or tournament, or appearance by a political candidate or other speaker.

This addition provides for the definition of an "event-specific" sign.

Article 55: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 12 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance which amendment, if adopted, would:

Revise Art. III General Zoning Provisions, Sec. 3.4 Signs, Para. 3.4.3.3.9 by adding a new Para: Para. 3.4.3.3.9.1 One (1) off-premises directional sign for the purpose of directing the public to an "OPEN HOUSE." Such sign may not exceed four (4) square feet of sign surface area. Messages must include the words "Open House" and shall be otherwise limited to name/address or identification, arrow or direction, and distance. Off-premises directional signs may be erected no earlier than one (1) day prior to the "OPEN HOUSE" and must be removed by the end of the day the "OPEN HOUSE" ends.

This change allows "open house" signs with detailed conditions.

Article 56: Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 13 as proposed by the Planning Board for the Town Zoning Ordinance which amendment, if adopted, would:

Revise Art. III, General Zoning Provisions, Sec. 3.4 Signs, Subsec. 3.4.4 Sign Standards, Para. 3.4.4.1 by adding a new Para: Para. 3.4.4.1.1 Temporary Signs for Activities or Events: Event-Specific Signs are permitted for display for a period not to exceed fifteen (15) days and must be removed at the end of the event. Event-Specific Signs must have permission of the property owner and receive a permit from the Zoning Office. Event-Specific advertising signs may not exceed twenty (20) square feet of surface area, and no more than two (2) such signs may be permitted for any event. In addition, up to ten (10) off-premises directional signs, not to exceed two (2) square feet per sign, may be permitted.

This change allows "event-specific" signs with detailed conditions.

WAYS & MEANS REPORT

The Ways and Means Committee would like to thank all Department Heads, Gary MacGuire, and the Board of Selectmen for providing the answers to our questions and the extra time put in throughout the 2011 budgeting process. It is apparent that the Department Heads are continuing to work well together to assist each other in providing efficient services to our citizens. We should encourage them to consider more cross-department prioritization.

Observations:

1. Ways & Means believes it is important that the town budget reflect necessary expenditures to comply with and be guided by a current Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). We recognize that adhering to the CIP is challenging if the supporting capital reserve funds are not funded from year to year.
2. Ways & Means believes that the budget should reflect prioritization of services across departments including maintaining infrastructure and essential services as opposed to non-essential services.
3. We are concerned that, over time, under-budgeting will undermine the infrastructure of our town and potentially cause a reduced number or quality of services. Our citizenry may be faced with significant tax increases in the near future years to address the impact of under-budgeting which may also cause a series of default budgets, further impacting the infrastructure.
4. Ways & Means believes that this proposed budget is transparent and that there is no "Fat." As far as the minimal .32% increase, the concerns that remain relate to how the actual budget amount has been proportioned rather than the budget as a whole.
5. As result of our budget review process, it is clear that the Department Heads have continued to grow their level of inter-departmental cooperation. It is this spirit of cooperation that has enabled the town of Amherst to weather difficult times such as these.

Warrant Article Positions

22 Road Reconstruction Bond: 7-0

- Ways & Means committee supports this article unanimously and believes it is a multi-year project that will only increase in costs the longer there is a delay in implementing the work.
- This year's warrant provides the authority to fund the total project, insuring that each year's bonding and spending will have the desired result of reducing the total number of miles of failed roads.
- Based on the discussion and arguments put forward, the provisions to grant a total authority with annual limitations seems both prudent and appropriate.
- This warrant article capitalizes on current interest rates, allows for a long term strategic reconstruction plan with flexibility as needed for director discretion.
- It is important to recognize that based on RFAC analysis, unless the town road maintenance spending is dramatically increased in the following years, the inventory of newly failed roads will outpace our ability to repair, and the town will find itself needing to pass a subsequent Road Reconstruction Warrants in several years.

23 Open Space Land Bond: 5-2

IN FAVOR: The voters can and should give the Board of Selectmen the authority to act to be able to compete for land when it becomes available. Open space land is important to our community for purposes of conservation and recreation needs. This warrant would provide purchasing authority over a three year period.

OPPOSED:

- Although there are many valid reasons for the town to own property to remove it from development, it does not appear that the Board of Selectmen and the Open Space Advisory Committee are aligned on either the values of or the process for utilizing this important authority.

- Given the short term impact to the use of Cemetery Fields for recreation, a stronger case is made to support the petition article for the purchase of recreation land.

24 Recreation Land Purchase Bond: 6-1

IN FAVOR:

- A separate warrant article is eligible for grants and additional funding which will provide the Recreation Commission more control.
- Cemetery Fields will no longer be available for recreational land use by September 1, 2014 and new recreation land will be required to support the town's needs.

OPPOSED: The Open Space Acquisition Committee (OSAC) is the group responsible for land acquisition for the Town of Amherst.

25 Operating Budget: 4-3

IN FAVOR:

- It takes a step in holding the line on spending.
- It establishes a position on the Cost of Living increase.
- As result of the department heads working together, with guidance from Gary MacGuire, the increase over last year's budget is only .32%

OPPOSED:

- Over time, Amherst could be faced with a series of default budgets as the current trend is leaning toward more significant increases due to lack of current funding. There has been no impact statement with regard to what it means to keep underfunding the infrastructure areas of the town and the potential impact of multiple default budgets.
- There was no clear prioritization in the preparation of this budget. The increase could potentially remain low while funds are distributed

based on priority. Although there is a significant interest in recreation and increase usage of the Library, town infrastructure needs funding. It is recommended that the departments, benefitting from maintenance performed by other town departments maintaining the town's infrastructure, be flexible in adjusting their budgets.

- Ways & Means recognizes that the DPW is a department in crisis. Not only is the road maintenance funding below what is recommended to avoid adding to the mileage needing to be reclaimed or reconstructed, the budget does not provide the department with the necessary funding to construct structures to adequately house and maintain the Town's capital equipment (e.g., trucks, plows, etc.).

26 Public Health Mosquito Surveillance and Control Program: 7-0

Testing at a minimum is important for public health to better understand the health risks to our citizenry.

27 Municipal Lease to Replace Transfer Station Scale: 3-4

IN FAVOR:

- A cost analysis spreadsheet was prepared that indicated the most cost-effective approach is to replace the existing scale.
- Even though the most cost effective method was to pay for it in one year to avoid lease interest charges, the request to replace the scale is supported.

OPPOSED:

- It is unclear what will happen if future lease payments are not approved.
- It appears the current request does not include funding the required infrastructure changes.
- The existing scale is still working and we do not know how much longer it will last.

30 Purchase Ambulance from Capital Reserve: 7-0

There is a detailed capital improvement plan regarding Ambulance replacement and the fleet is effectively managed to maximize the available years of use.

31 Establish a Bridge Replacement Capital Reserve Fund: 7-0

- This capital reserve fund should not have been discontinued given the number of bridges in town.
- Now that there are three locations needing significant repair, this capital reserve fund must be funded to keep tax impact to a minimum.

33 Fire Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund: 7-0

The replacement cost of fire apparatus has increased to approximately \$600,000. We need to be funding this replacement, over time, to avoid a significant impact to taxes.

34 Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund: 7-0

The average cost of an ambulance ranges from \$130,000 to \$200,000. Raising money gradually keeps the purchase at a minimal impact when it becomes necessary.

35 Assessing Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund: 7-0

Spreading the impact of this expensive mandated requirement, which is due in two years, minimizes the tax impact when compared with a lump sum expenditure.

36 Communications Center Capital Reserve Fund: 7-0

This capital reserve fund was established for the purpose of "purchasing new and/or replacement communications equipment" which includes the eventual replacement of the communications tower.

37 Town 250th Anniversary Celebration Capital Reserve Fund: 7-0

It is important to celebrate the anniversary of our town and the monies to fund the effort are supported.

38 Forestview Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund: 7-0

The committee recognizes that this is a requirement mandated by the state and funding the capital reserve minimizes the tax impact to our residents by being spread over time.

39 Town Computer System Capital Reserve Fund: 6-1

IN FAVOR: This fund, as outlined in its original request in 2006, is for "the purchase of major computer system components, and/or critical software update for all Town Departments." Should there be a significant impact to the Town technology infrastructure due to weather or other events, the cost of repair/replacement can be high. The capital reserve account will allow for this type of major purchase with little impact to the tax rate by funding it gradually.

There are critical software applications used in Town operations which are aging and at some point will need to be upgraded or replaced. This capital reserve fund will allow for this as well with minimal tax impact in any single year.

OPPOSED: There is no Capital Plan for the Town Computer System.

40 Health & Human Service Agencies: 3-4

IN FAVOR: It is appropriate for us to donate to organizations that provide needed services to residents of our town which the town could not afford to provide.

OPPOSED:

- Tax dollars should not be used for charitable giving.
- Residents should be able to give to the charitable organizations of their choice, not dictated by those outlined by a request of the town.
- There may be tax advantages to individuals to make a personal donation that is not afforded in payments of a property tax bill.
- Simply noting that an agency provides services to certain town citizens does not warrant use of public funds to support organizations which may have other political or social agendas (real or perceived).

43 To Create a Capital Reserve Fund for Transportation with an Additional Motor Vehicle Registration Fee: 0-7

- Not in favor of adding to car registration fees which recently increased.
- Do not want to set a precedent for future funding requests from other agencies.

It has been our pleasure to serve the residents of Amherst as members of Ways & Means. We encourage everyone to participate in the process, to reach out to those involved with the process for more information, and to vote on March 9th.

John Siemienowicz, Chair

Charlene Carper

John Maynard Peter Eiche

Deirdre Rogusky

DiJon Fasoli

Jack Kunkel

Steve Nelson (Alternate)

David Chen (Alternate)

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR VOTERS

TOWN TAX COMMITMENT COMPARISON								
	<u>Amherst</u>	<u>Exeter</u>	<u>Goffstown</u>	<u>Hanover</u>	<u>Hollis</u>	<u>Milford</u>	<u>Pelham</u>	<u>Windham</u>
2007 Population	11,714	14,735	17,632	11,064	7,738	15,011	12,504	13,137
Square Mileage	34.8	19.8	37.1	49.1	31.8	25.4	26.3	26.7
Town Tax Commitment*	5,514,876	9,577,519	11,313,787	7,073,902	5,459,805	6,688,673	6,887,240	7,192,141
Total Tax Commitment*	35,561,679	33,924,519	30,485,653	30,877,630	26,107,069	28,355,377	26,012,469	37,814,443
Town Percentage of Tax*	15.5	28.2	37.1	22.9	20.9	23.6	25.7	19
<i>*4 Year Average 2006-2009</i>								

Town of Amherst

Tax Facts

?????? *True or False* ??????

True or False - The amount you pay in property taxes is based solely on the town's budget.

FALSE - The amount the taxpayer pays in property taxes is a combination of the town, local school, state school, and county budgets. More than **83%** of the property taxes paid are disbursed to the schools and county. That leaves less than **17%** for the town.

True or False - The amount you pay in property taxes is based on the gross budget amount that appears on the ballot.

FALSE – The amount you pay in property taxes is the difference between the amount printed on the ballot **less** the amount of anticipated revenues.

True or False - Property valuation impacts the tax rate.

TRUE – *The higher the total town property valuation is, the lower the tax rate is. The amount of taxes you pay is spread proportionately among all property owners based on the value of their property.*

True or False - If the town property assessments are valued higher than the market values, I will pay more taxes.

FALSE - Your property taxes are based on the allocation of your property assessment to the entire town property assessment. On average, the town uses the same valuation rate for all property.

TOWN OF AMHERST PROPOSED FY 2011 BUDGET

	FY 10 Adopted Budget	Proposed FY 2011 Budget	Dollar Change	% Change
General Government Executive	331,609.94	334,483.51	2,873.57	0.87
Election, Registration, Vital Statistics	123,840.89	125,657.36	1,816.47	1.47
Financial Administration	156,095.68	158,698.25	2,602.57	1.67
Tax Collection	94,285.71	95,954.53	1,668.82	1.77
Assessing and Revaluation of Property	175,798.52	175,820.52	22.00	0.01
Legal Expenses	75,500.00	76,000.00	500.00	0.66
Personnel Administration / Insurance	126,872.40	140,312.68	13,440.28	10.59
Planning Board	18,650.00	18,050.00	-600.00	-3.22
Zoning Department	215,800.49	215,045.34	-755.15	-0.35
General Government Buildings	273,978.85	274,983.13	1,004.28	0.37
Cemeteries	43,432.60	45,755.23	2,322.63	5.35
Property / Liability Insurance	90,882.00	88,902.00	-1,980.00	-2.18
Police Department	1,834,467.18	1,887,181.97	52,714.79	2.87
Emergency Medical Services	467,827.26	471,968.45	4,141.19	0.89
Fire Department	409,385.13	422,010.03	12,624.90	3.08
Emergency Management	7,176.50	7,715.30	538.80	7.51
Public Safety Communications	364,201.22	361,957.03	-2,244.19	-0.62
Public Works Administration	348,572.90	362,740.73	14,167.83	4.06
Department of Public Works	2,293,075.05	2,349,317.11	56,242.06	2.45
Street Lighting	26,679.82	26,679.82	0.00	0.00
Souhegan Regional Landfill District	497,967.23	444,732.14	-53,235.09	-10.69
Landfill Department	289,057.52	290,034.47	976.95	0.34
Baboosic Lake Septic	6,000.00	0.00	-6,000.00	-100.00
Health Administration	1,941.35	1,941.35	0.00	0.00
Animal Control (Dog Officer)	400.00	400.00	0.00	0.00
Health Agencies and Hospitals	36,000.00	0.00	-36,000.00	-100.00
Welfare (Direct Assistance)	26,000.00	26,000.00	0.00	0.00
Recreation Department	299,824.03	306,992.83	7,168.80	2.39
Parks and Grounds	15,437.31	15,608.75	171.44	1.11
Peabody Mill Environmental Center	24,929.97	24,500.00	-429.97	-1.72
Library	801,790.29	819,198.70	17,408.41	2.17
Patriotic Purposes	9,000.00	9,000.00	0.00	0.00
Amherst Heritage Commission	535.00	535.00	0.00	0.00
Conservation Commission	8,000.00	8,000.00	0.00	0.00
Principal - Long Term Bonds and Notes	182,683.20	144,156.70	-38,526.50	-21.09
Interest - Long Term Bonds and Notes	51,871.96	30,311.61	-21,560.35	-41.56
	9,729,570.00	9,760,644.54	31,074.54	0.32

TOWN OF AMHERST FY 2011 ANTICIPATED REVENUES				
	FY 2010 Antici- pated	FY 2011 Pro- posed	Dollar Change	% Change
Land Use Change Tax	50,000.00	50,000.00	0.00	0.00
Timber Tax	5,000.00	3,000.00	-2,000.00	-40.00
Payment in Lieu of Taxes	22,673.00	23,935.00	1,262.00	5.57
Interest & Penalties -Taxes	145,000.00	150,000.00	5,000.00	3.45
Business Licenses & Permits	138,000.00	147,500.00	9,500.00	6.88
Motor Vehicle Permit Fees	2,200,000.00	2,224,000.00	24,000.00	1.09
Permit Fee Revenue	84,350.00	104,700.00	20,350.00	24.13
Other Licenses, Permits, Fees	19,650.00	20,250.00	600.00	3.05
Federal Grants	1,100.00	1,300.00	200.00	18.18
Meals & Rooms	517,936.00	517,936.00	0.00	0.00
Highway Block Grant	292,726.00	325,000.00	32,274.00	11.03
Forest Land Reimbursement	26.00	26.00	0.00	0.00
Other	1,325.00	0.00	-1,325.00	-100.00
Other Intergovernmental	70,200.00	70,200.00	0.00	0.00
Income from Departments	289,550.00	281,250.00	-8,300.00	-2.87
Septic Usage Charge	74,583.50	0.00	-74,583.50	-100.00
Landfill Income	94,875.00	95,000.00	125.00	0.13
Sale of Municipal Property	10,000.00	7,000.00	-3,000.00	-30.00
Interest on Investments	60,000.00	70,000.00	10,000.00	16.67
Fines and Forfeits	12,000.00	11,775.00	-225.00	-1.88
	4,088,994.50	-4,102,872.00	-13,877.50	0.34



Amherst CodeRED Emergency System

The Amherst Public Safety Communications Center has implemented a new public alert system, **CodeRED**, which allows residents to receive timely notification by phone of weather related disasters, such as evacuation notices or dangerous conditions in our community, missing children alerts and/or pandemic flu awareness.

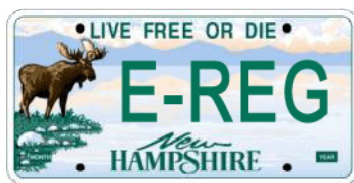
CodeRED gives the town the ability to deliver pre-recorded emergency phone notifications and messages to either targeted areas of the town or to the entire community at a rate of up to 60,000 calls per hour. The system not only delivers important messages faster, it gives individuals the ability to add their own phone numbers directly to the system's telephone database.

The system however is only as good as the telephone database supporting it, so it is critical for our residents and businesses to make sure that they provide accurate and up to date contact information or they will not be called. It is especially critical for those who have moved to a new address or changed phone numbers in the past three months, who have an unlisted phone number or who use a cell phone as their main home or business line.

Residents can easily register any desired phone numbers by completing a brief online form. To sign up, visit the town's website www.AmherstNH.gov and click on the **CodeRED logo** to register. You can additionally register via the Amherst Police Department website www.AmherstPolice.com and click on the **CodeRED** link. Other information on that page further describes the program and how it works. Those without website access can contact the Amherst Communications Center at 673-4900 from 8 am-5 pm on Monday-Friday to provide their information by phone.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE

Now is the time to file for property tax exemptions available through the Town of Amherst Assessing and Tax Office. The Town of Amherst has adopted several property tax exemptions and tax credits over the years that may benefit our qualifying elderly residents, veterans and more. These exemptions and the qualifying criteria for them are mandated by State Statute. Please contact the Town of Amherst Assessing Office or Tax Office at 673-6041 Ext. 201 or 202, with any questions you may have, or to obtain an application. Applications must be received prior to April 15, 2010 to qualify for the upcoming 2010 property tax year. Details regarding these exemptions are also available on the Town website at www.amherstnh.gov.



Online Vehicle Registration

The Town of Amherst offers online motor vehicle registration through the *E-Reg* system. This system is offered as a convenience to our residents and will cost up to an additional \$1.85 to cover the costs of the online registrar. At present, online registration must be paid with an online check or bank transfer; with the hope that credit cards may be supported in the future. You may also still register your car in person at the town hall, or by mail, as explained in your renewal notice. Only a renewal of an existing registration may be done online; registration of a new vehicle must be done in person at the town hall.

For your convenience, the Board of Selectmen encourages you to use the ballot summary sheet below and bring it with you to the voting polls on March 9, 2010

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>		<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Article 22: Road Bond	_____	_____	Article 33: Fire Truck Reserve	_____	_____
Article 23: Open Space Bond	_____	_____	Article 34: Ambulance Reserve	_____	_____
Article 24: Recreation Bond	_____	_____	Article 35: Assessing Reserve	_____	_____
Article 25: Operating Budget	_____	_____	Article 36: Comm Ctr Reserve	_____	_____
Article 26: Mosquito Control	_____	_____	Article 37: 250 th Fund	_____	_____
Article 27: Replace Scale	_____	_____	Article 38: Cemetery Reserve	_____	_____
Article 28: Fact Finders Report	_____	_____	Article 39: Computer Reserve	_____	_____
Article 29: Special Town Meeting	_____	_____	Article 40: Health Agencies	_____	_____
Article 30: Ambulance Purchase	_____	_____	Article 41: Define Marriage	_____	_____
Article 31: Bridge Capital Reserve	_____	_____	Article 42: Town Meeting	_____	_____
Article 32: Rec Capital Reserve	_____	_____	Article 43: Transport. Fund	_____	_____

The Board of Selectmen invites all of our citizens to participate in the many events planned this year to celebrate the anniversary of our town.



"Falling in love with Amherst is almost like a disease. If you stay here long enough the town really gets a hold of you and you begin to appreciate the history we share, the unique value of the common, the goodness of the people, and the beauty of the land." - Betty Arnold, 1912-2005